

## Advice for ERC Applicants

1. Planning an ERC application? First, check which category of award you are seeking (**Starter, Consolidator, Advanced**). Applicants for the Starter award for example must have **2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD** with extensions possible under certain circumstances. For all categories, check eligibility, including rules on re-submissions (See latest ERC Work Programme for details).

Then have a look at current ERC awardees for your category (Starter, Consolidator, Advanced), particularly ones in your discipline, and try and benchmark your achievements against them. Have a look at what has been funded in the past <https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects> and then research the recipient's academic profile. To help in this, consider doing an exercise in which you create a table using particular headings and then fill in the relevant numbers of how many of them you have done e.g.

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles -

Books-

Funded Grants-

Although a relatively crude measure - this will give you a clear indication of what to concentrate on and help the benchmarking process.

2. When you have researched those who have been funded, evaluate your own CV. If you have doubts about the competitiveness of your CV, do seek advice before proceeding and email your CV to your Faculty's Research Support contact point or Research Development Officer.
3. Scientific excellence is always the sole evaluation criterion. You must have an **excellent idea** and an **excellent track record** to have a chance of success.
4. For ERC applications, keep FOUR things in mind: the **call**, the **idea**, the **person**, the **process**. Remember, you must have a great idea for a **project** and convince the reviewers that you are the **person** to complete it.
5. Read the annual **Work Programme** and the **Information for Applicants** and Register your proposal on H2020 Participant Portal.
6. Familiarise yourself with the **on-line submission** process (Registration, Administrative Information, Part B, Host Support Letter, Annexes)  
Download **Part B** Templates – this will be **your proposal**.
7. **In brief, there is a: Single-stage application procedure; three-part proposal:**
  - Part A: Administrative information
  - Part B1: Extended synopsis, CV and details on track record
  - Part B2: Scientific proposal (state of the art and objectives, methodology and resources)

And a **two-stage review process**:

- Stage 1: Part B1 of proposals are reviewed by members of the ERC's 25 review panels
  - Stage 2: Part B2 (and B1) reviewed by panel members and external expert peer reviewers
  - StG& CoG applicants through to Stage 2 are required to attend an interview in Brussels
8. Choose the correct panel – there are 25 panels in 3 domains: Physical Sciences & Engineering; Life Sciences; Social Sciences and Humanities. Choose the panel carefully by researching previous evaluators and also checking previous laureates (<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>) . Consider where your main impact is and which panel is likely to appreciate your objectives, the novelty of your idea, your CV. For Starter and Consolidator Grants, which panel best represents the people you would be comfortable presenting to at the interview?
  9. Give time to writing your project proposal and check that your idea fits with ERC's philosophy and criteria. Your project must be ground-breaking and novel. Does your research address important challenges? Are the objectives ambitious? Is it high risk/high gain? Is your approach feasible? Is your methodology appropriate? Are the timescales and resources necessary and properly justified?
  10. Prepare a budget according to the needs of the project and seek advice early. Contact your Faculty's Research Support contact point or Research Development Officer for assistance.
  11. In terms of track record, see **Information for Applicants** for advice on this section. It is important to demonstrate the impact of your research. In terms of journal articles it may be helpful to include field relevant bibliometric indicators (e.g. h-Index) however only include if relevant or if they indicate something meaningful. If including citation numbers, self-citations should be omitted.
  12. Adhere to internal deadlines and upload your proposal onto TORA at least 5 working days before you plan to submit.
  13. You can submit the proposal to the ERC on the participant portal as many times as you wish up to the deadline. Every submitted version will replace the previously submitted one.
  14. Make sure you have all the annexes before you submit including PhD diploma (for Starter and Consolidator), Host support letter, ethical issue annex (when relevant).
  15. Aim to have a draft proposal **weeks in advance** of the deadline. Bear in mind that ERC applications can take months (and sometimes longer) to prepare.
  16. You are advised to submit your final proposal to the ERC at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline.

## Financial Supports:

- Know what supports are available to you. There are, for example, **EI supports for ERC applicants**: <http://www.horizon2020.ie/who-to-contact/financial-assistance-for-horizon2020/>

The application form notes that applicants need to contact the NCP in advance before submitting a support request however the NCPs have stated that what is needed in advance is a brief mail from the Research Office to inform them about applications that they will be receiving. **Please note! NCPs will be within their rights to refuse to handle an application if they have not received prior notice from an appropriate representative of the host Research Body that a given researcher is about to submit a support application. Applications will only be accepted in the region of up to six months before the call closes so do submit applications as early as possible.**

- Unsuccessful applicants to the most recent ERC Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, or Advanced Grant call (applying under the **Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE)** domain or the **Life Sciences (LS) domain** only), whose proposals scored “A” at Stage 2 but who were not funded, are eligible to apply to the **SFI ERC Development Programme**: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/open-calls/sfi-erc-development-programme.html>
- Unsuccessful applicants to the most recent ERC Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, or Advanced Grant call from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences domain who achieve an ‘A’ rated outcome- but do not receive funding - in the European Research Council (ERC) competitive process can apply to the Irish Research Council’s **Basic Research Excellence Award**. The BREA is contingent on a bona fide intention to reapply to the ERC in the next available call.

## ERC National Contact Points:

Deirdre Quinn: ERC National Contact Point (*Humanities and Social Sciences*)

Maria Nash: ERC National Contact Point (*Physical Sciences & Engineering and Life Sciences*)